

*Mail to DE
Did I send you this?*

The First Quarter Century

by Harold L. Oram

*(By the way, without any benefit of time
he has begun to offer some*

*the story of his relation +
Friends - very
now interesting to me M.*

The Oram Group was founded in 1940 as a child of the Spanish Civil War. I had been in charge of public relations and fund-raising for the Spanish Loyalist cause in this country since 1937. Following the overthrow of the Spanish Republic in 1939, I was asked to raise funds for the successor organization, the Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign. Accordingly, the firm of Harold L. Oram, Inc., ultimately named The Oram Group, was founded in 1940.

Of the more than 350 clients served during the first quarter-century, only a few will be mentioned here. Any dates merely indicate the beginning of this association.

Our first client, the Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign, was led by Roger Baldwin of the American Civil Liberties Union and Norman Thomas, American Socialist leader. We organized the Emergency Rescue Committee, now the International Rescue Committee, in 1940 after the fall of France. We brought 3,500 intellectual refugees, menaced by the Nazi conquest, most to the United States. Other refugee organizations served in following years included The Latin American Refugee Fund (for Spanish Loyalist Refugees), 1940; The Progressive Schools Committee for Refugee Children (fleeing from Hitler), 1941; The Citizens Committee for Displaced Persons, 1948; the Resettlement Campaign for Exiled Professionals led by Reinhold Niebuhr, 1950; The Committee to Aid Refugee Chinese Intellectuals, 1951; The American Emergency Committee for Tibetan Refugees, Lowell Thomas, Chairman, 1958, and others.

In 1949, the firm initiated the Iron Curtain Refugee Campaign under Admiral Richard E. Byrd to assist those fleeing from Eastern Europe to escape Communist tyranny. In 1955, we organized the Hungarian Freedom Fund, John J. McCloy, Chairman, to succor many thousands of Hungarian refugees fleeing to the West. At the time of the Berlin Airlift, the firm organized the Free Berlin Fund for Mayor Ernst Reuter of Berlin under the chairmanship of Henry Luce.

A 45-Year Client

The firm has been an American leader in assisting predominantly black organizations and institutions to achieve full citizenship in our society. In the summer of 1943, as an aftermath of the Detroit race riots, the firm issued a nationwide appeal signed by William Allan Nielson on behalf of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, of which Thurgood Marshall was Director-Counsel. That relationship has lasted to

this date, and was the first of a large number of clients served within the black leadership community.

Others include the National Urban League and the National Council of Negro Women. Predominantly black educational institutions served include, among others, Hampton Institute (now University), Howard University, and Meharry Medical College, for which we helped raise more than \$88 million, the largest sum ever raised for a predominantly black institution.

The firm helped significantly in the rehabilitation of Europe following World War II. Probably our greatest service was the organization of the Committee for the Marshall Plan to Aid European Recovery, following Secretary of State Marshall's Harvard Commencement Address given in June, 1946. The firm conceived, organized and financed the committee which mobilized support for the legislation creating the European Recovery Administration. This campaign, under the chairmanship of Henry L. Stimson and Robert P. Patterson,



At a party in his honor in 1979, Harold Oram (L) talks with Roger Baldwin (R), founding director of the American Civil Liberties Union. Oram's association with Baldwin goes back to 1936 when Baldwin helped organize the Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign, and Oram was director of public relations and fund raising. (Roger Baldwin died in August, 1981).

secured an appropriation from Congress of \$5 billion, an unheard-of sum in those days. It made possible the social and economic recovery of free Europe. Another important European committee served beginning in 1950 was the American Committee for United Europe, William T. Donovan, Chairman.

In 1946, we organized the Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists (ECAS), for a group of internationally famous scientists who had developed the atomic bomb. They were led by Nobel Laureates Albert Einstein and Harold C. Urey. Their objective was to defeat the May-Johnson bill, which would have placed the development of atomic energy under military control. We were successful and subsequent legislation placed atomic energy under civilian control.

One fundraising document issued on behalf of the ECAS has become a matter of historical record. A sentence from a telegram appealing for funds prepared by this writer and signed by Albert Einstein is now included in *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*. It is undoubtedly one of the most widely quoted apothegms of our time: "The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything

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save our modes of thinking and thus we drift towards unparalleled catastrophe."

The above quotation appears frequently forty years later in the national and international media and was quoted recently in a Washington address by former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt. Concurrently, it was included in a widely distributed publication of the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize winner, the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

The Third World

Over the years, we have served many clients concerned with the Third World, beginning in 1946 with the East and West Association, led by Pearl Buck. Other clients working in the Third World included the American Committee on Africa; the India League; the American Medical Center for Burma, Dr. Gordon Seagrave, Director; the American Bureau for Medical Aid to China; and the Fund for Asia, of which James A. Michener was Chairman.

The firm pioneered in the promotion of population policy, having organized, in 1960, the World Population Emergency Campaign (WPEC) under the leadership of Hugh Moore and Lammot du Pont Copeland. Subsequently, that organization merged with the Planned Parenthood Federation of America to become Planned Parenthood-World Population, of which Cass Canfield became Chairman.

Over the years, the firm has assisted in mobilizing support for ethnic minorities, including The American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born, of which John Dewey was Chairman; the Association for American Indian Affairs, Oliver LaFarge, Chairman; the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund; and ASPIRA, representing American citizens of Puerto Rican ancestry.

One of the greatest services rendered by the firm was securing support for far-sighted environmental programs. We brought Prince Philip to this country in 1960 to establish the World Wildlife Fund, which has become the leader in the protection of threatened species worldwide. In 1968, we revived the Scenic Hudson Preservation Conference which had pioneered in the struggle for a modern environmental ethic. An outgrowth of this was the Natural Resources Defense Council, headed by Stephen Duggan, which has become the pre-eminent legal defense agency in this country serving environmental interests.

Interesting clients in the field of health, welfare and rehabilitation included: the World Veterans Fund, Harold Russell, President; Dr. Tom Dooley's Medical International Cooperation (MEDICO); American Research Hospital for Children in Poland; Recording for the Blind; the World Rehabilitation Fund, headed by Dr. Howard A. Rusk; and the Albert Schweitzer Hospital at Lambarene.

Among clients in education were the Shakespeare Birthday Trust at Stratford-upon-Avon; Robert Hutchins' Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions; The Winston Churchill Memorial and Library at Fulton, Missouri; Berea College; Antioch College; the New School for Social Research; and Randolph Compton's Fund for Peace.

Another signal service the firm rendered was financing the drive to reserve 20% of television station licenses for educational broadcasting. In 1951, the Ford Foundation, which had invested millions of philanthropic dollars in the organization of

educational broadcasting stations throughout the country, faced an impasse. The announcement by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that it was preparing to issue the remainder of VHF licenses upon application, indicated that all such licenses would go to commercial interests. The Foundation felt unable to sponsor an appearance on behalf of educational TV interests before the FCC because of its tax status.

At this point the National Association of Educational Broadcasters (NAEB), totally without funds, requested this firm to help. We formed a committee of college Presidents headed by Robert Hutchins of the University of Chicago to appear before the FCC to press the case for a reservation of licenses on behalf of educational TV. In the end, Telford Taylor, the lawyer representing the NAEB, secured reservation of 20% of licenses to be issued on behalf of educational TV. This event marked the beginning of the great contribution educational TV has made to our society.

The firm has been privileged to work with many notable women, including Pearl Buck; Mrs. Cass Canfield; Mrs. William Allan Nielson; Dorothy Parker, who headed the Spanish Children's Fund; Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Chairman of the Committee for the Nation's Health; and Margaret Sanger.

Great Women Executives

No resume of the firm's beginnings would be adequate if it did not mention the contribution of the great women executives who served, on the average, 20 years before retirement. They include Eileen Fry, who began work as a volunteer in 1940 while her husband headed the Marseilles office of the Emergency Rescue Committee and who remained to lead the firm while I served a four year hitch in the U.S. Army. She died in 1949.

Others who shared all or part of the first quarter century were Eve Bates and Anna Frank Loeb who built the NAACP Legal Defense Fund from an annual budget of \$15,000 to \$5 million on her retirement, and three extraordinarily gifted executives—the late Sankay Perlowin, Elizabeth Hicks, and Kay Lautman, whose crowning achievement is the success of the World Wildlife Fund.

The Oram Group has not always lived up to its insignia, "For the Good, the True and the Beautiful" but not for lack of trying. As we move toward our 50th Anniversary, under the leadership of Hank Goldstein, we note the successful drive to create the long delayed Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. as a positive harbinger of the future.

—Harold L. Oram
Honorary Chairman
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NUCS

Krieger

Harold Gram

"recognize comes from" (Russell-Eustis)

To avoid the ~~big~~ temptation to proper,
that, or copy out ^{the} message of external
people,
it is not enough to

